

Brigham Young University
BA Art, Class of 1950

A Capella choir aims at perfection while touring throughout the United States edifying the name of the "Y."



Left to right: Nets Hutchinson, Tom Stone, Evelyn Murray, Joe Bentley, Karol Kulm, Packard Condie, and Pat Strong aided Professor Weight in planning recreation for the group.

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The Christmas television program



Newell B. Weight
Director

College Choir develops increased appreciation of music and vocally improves the individual.

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Boyd C. Rich

I really shouldn't have registered for the BYU in 1946, because I did not qualify. I hadn't matriculated. I thought my brother and sister had not either, that they had just gone through grade eleven and then they had gone to the BYU. So I thought, "Well, now I'm done with the grade eleven and now I'll go to the BYU." I hate to admit that, but that's what happened. I was raised in Canada, but I was under the impression the Canadian system of education was so much higher than the United States that I felt I had enough qualification to.

The reason I told you about not registering right is because I had to be there to meet my sweetheart. We met in German class at the BYU in 1946, and it took ten years for us to get together because we didn't like each other. When we finally did, he was in music too, and he played the piano, and so he accompanied me in singing throughout the rest of our life together. We've had wonderful experiences in music. My mother was an artist, so I felt that I should continue on doing what she did. I'm a fair artist; I can still paint and things like that, but not the joy; the joy does not come through art. It comes through music, and my music together with my husband. We've done mostly church singing.

I think the thing that I've enjoyed the most was being in the church atmosphere at BYU. Then when it came time for graduation, of course, I couldn't graduate because I had not met the entrance requirement, and at the time was working in the testing department, under Anton K. Romney. So they said I'd have to take the entrance requirements test and see if I qualified to pass, and so I did. I was able to get my diploma at the BYU. It's sad that I did that, but the Lord wanted us to be together. I know that the Lord wanted us to be together. There is no doubt in my mind. I had to meet him and I had to fall in love with him, and I had to spend my life with him, and we have seven children, and we've had an interesting, wonderful life.

Well, the German class I was in, my brother and I sat together. He was a much better student than I. Then I met him (Brother Rich), he was from Wyoming, he was a country boy, and he was very nervous. We were both nervous; we had a blind date that was not very much fun. Then he left school and I didn't see him much after that blind date when we went to the Sweetheart Ball in Springville. They didn't have a big place for floor dances at that time at the BYU, and so it was in Springville that we went, and it was very uncomfortable for both of us. Then he left two years later and went to the mission field.

He served in the same mission that I did. He was called to the Czechoslovakia Mission, and they closed the borders at that time, they wouldn't give or allow them visas because the Russians had taken over. Oh, my husband wanted to go to the Czech Republic. He wanted to go so bad. He was devastated because he had had communication with people in Czechoslovakia. He loves the Czech people. He felt so bad that he had to go to Switzerland.

My husband, during the war years they sent commodities over to the Czech Republic, left a little note in a pocket of one of the jackets that he sent over. So they had communication, and they would crochet things and send them back over to his little village in Star Valley, Wyoming. His mother would sell them in the community and then send the money back to Czechoslovakia. So he really, really wanted to go to Czechoslovakia.

Instead, he was transferred to the mission that I later was called to go to: Switzerland, and he was in Austria too. Then I went on my mission after I graduated. After I left the mission field, I went home. I was born in Canada, of course, and I stayed there for about a year after my mission. Then I just felt the urge to go down to the BYU and get a Master's in Music. I wanted to develop my music to a greater degree than I had. I had just the basics; I had not had music theory, and I had wanted to go and be a concert vocalist. So that was my goal, so I went back to the BYU, and at that time, he had been in the military for three years.

He had met a man in Austria when he was a mission secretary for ten months, and then the mission president asked him if he wanted to finish his mission in the mission home, or did he want to go into the field, into Austria, and he wanted to go to Austria. He had travelled around the mission with the mission president and his wife so much that he fell in love with Austria. So he went to Austria and there he met a man that was in the secret service. Counter-intelligence. And he says, "If you go home, they're going to put you in the army immediately, and you're going to be drafted in the army." And they said, "If you go

home and sign up for three years, you'll be able to go where you want to go." So he finished his mission in Austria in a certain town, and then when he went back home, he did; he immediately went and signed up in the army, and he was able to go right back to his training with the secret service, he was able to go right back to the same city where he was as a missionary. It was interesting that he had that experience. Then after his service was over, and after my mission was over, we went and met again at the mission reunion and that was it.

So that was ten years, and then we wanted to have a family; we wanted to have children. We had seven. We managed to have seven children even though we married late. I feel that the secret service was difficult for our family. We've had our ups and downs and our difficulties, but it's a wonderful life that we've had together. Music has been the glue that has held us together. It's interesting that I am not a piano player, I'm really not, and he is. After his mission, he and his companion were able to tour the Scandinavian countries and give concerts all the way up to Norway and back, and they had a wonderful time giving piano concerts. He was very gifted in playing, and so it was wonderful to have an accompanist all my life.

Musical Training

Brother Weight's choir was the most marvelous thing of my whole schooling. I loved it. I didn't want to go; I didn't think that I would qualify. I didn't want to go, but against it I finally went. There was also the Madsens at that time. I took choir from the Madsens before then, and I took vocal from Franklin Madsen and from (Norman) Gulbrandsen, and from Newell Weight. Newell Weight is the one that gave me such a love for music that it has been the greatest blessing throughout my whole life.

A capella singing, itself, it's such a joy to hear the combination of voices singing together, and the melodies—being able to breathe as one, being able to feel the melodic unity of voice, there's nothing like it. I loved it. It was a wonderful experience. We went on different tours, we went to California, which is the major tour that I remember.

There were about 40 people in the choir if I estimate it right. I was very shy and very bashful. So I was one of those little wrens that stayed in the background, but it was a glorious experience. It was just wonderful. Brother Weight taught us how to lead music. He could bring music out of us with his hands. It was the most wonderful experience to sing under his direction. He was a marvelous director.

I will say that Brother Gulbrandsen was the one that really taught me how to sing. I started singing, and my mother insisted that I take vocal lessons. I really didn't want to take vocal lessons, and I didn't really want to take piano lessons, but I had four different people help me along the way to music. One of them was at the Conservatory of Music, and then there was Brother Madsen. He helped me to learn so much. I had to learn five new songs to sing to him, each lesson. That's all he did: have me sing these songs. He didn't tell me how to sing or anything, he just had me learn repertoire.

Then I had Newell Weight, and he showed me how to emote, how to feel the emotions. He helped in that area. And then Brother Gulbrandsen taught me how to sing, how to produce music, how to make music swell and how to bring music down. He taught me really the technique of singing. He was a wonderful teacher. I just loved him. He was the one that taught in the summer Opera workshop. And my timidity was my biggest downfall. It took a long time to overcome timidity. It was something that happened over the years.

I was also in [the Madsen's] choirs. It was magnificent. They were big choirs, and we sang big choral numbers. We sang sometimes from Mendelsohn, the big choir numbers. It was always the magnificent choirs. It was never anything less than fantastic. Sister Madsen was the one that was the biggest musician, the most renowned musician. Brother Madsen, as I understand, was one of her students. Yeah, so she married him. Oh, she was very, very talented. She really was. She was magnificent.

That's the way things went. And then I fell in love with my husband, and I could not concentrate on my music theory class, so I had an "incomplete" on that. That was the end of my training at the BYU. We got married and then we went out to Illinois so that he could get his master's degree in his field of expertise. So that was the end of that. We just concentrated on church music and I just led the choirs;

everywhere we went, I was privileged to lead choirs. I love leading choirs, it's my biggest joy to be able to lead choirs.

Family and the Laycocks

I had gone back to the BYU and I started taking Music Theory from my cousin. My cousins were Ralph and Harold Laycock. They were in the Music Department. Harold was in Music Theory and played the viola and Ralph was the head of the band.

My history goes back to my parents being born in America. My father was born in Morgan; my mother was born in southern Utah. Brigham Young sent them [mother's family] to New Harmony to colonize down there. So they were the Redds. And the Redds and the Breiners and the Romneys, and that's the family that my mother was born in.

My father was born an Ursenbach, and his father was very gifted musically. He was a wanderer. He was a writer; he wrote *The Quest*. It's about a Jewish Rabbi who wanted to find the pearl of great price. He realized that the Jewish people no longer had the power of the priesthood, so he was searching for a church that would have that power that was missing in the Jewish faith. It's a very in-depth book.

That was what he did. He liked to write, and everywhere he moved, he liked to organize a band. A mandolin band. And he taught his children to play the instruments if they wanted to, and my father was very good at trumpet. And in that band was a man named George Laycock, and he fell in love with my mother's sister, Fern. George and Fern, and Octave (which is my father's name) and Jessie (which is my mother) were such good friends and they did a lot of things together. They played music together. They were very, very musically talented people.

The children did not perform music together very much. They were born and raised on a farm: George became a farmer and had a big spread out south of Lethbridge where we lived. And mother's father wanted to move to a place where his family could be together because New Harmony was such a tiny town and he had thirteen children. So he moved to southern Alberta. He had a lot of land and it is interesting that they were on the farm most of the time, so our relationship with them was not close as children, but it was just the relationship that they had together as couples. Husband and wife, couples.

But I knew Ralph and Harold really well, I mean they were cousins and we did get together for parties, but we did not do anything musically except that Harold and I did a number for conference one time. My father finally asked me to sing at one of the conferences. It was a stake conference, it was not down here. So I prepared a number and sang, but I forgot my words, and I had to start over again and it made my dad so sad that I goofed. And that's my only claim to fame.

Brigham Young University

I am so thrilled with the BYU. I am so thrilled with the way the church has exalted the Savior and the principles of the gospel through the BYU. I am so grateful that I went to the BYU.

My testimony was tested. I was born, and my parents were very staunch. My mother and father were always in leadership positions. My father was always mission or stake president. Later on I went with him to Eastern Canada where he was mission president. And after that he was called to be the stake president of the Lethbridge, Alberta stake at the same time he was mission president, so he commuted. I mean, he went from one end of the continent to the other, and then after he was there, he was temple president for twelve years.

My testimony has always been there. But when I went to the BYU, I was no longer under the direction of my parents. And so that was my test: to see if I would remain faithful. There was nothing wrong, but it was a test for me to see if I would be faithful. I didn't have my father to say, "Remember who you are."

They had just started building the science building when I left, but we had the Joseph Smith Memorial Building and we had the Maeser Building. The library was the old library, not the new one. The Fine Arts Building was later. We had classes in the Concert Hall, down on the lower campus, and the Joseph Smith Memorial Building, we did a lot of choir practicing there.

It was an experience and a half when they talked about stereophonic sound. The a capella choir was able to participate in stereophonic sound and they had microphones, four microphones across to show them how stereophonic sound worked. The technology was amazing. And it was exciting to be able to participate in that experiment there. I remember we had a choir number that had to have a choir at the opposite end and it took a while for the sound to come back and forth, and they had to figure out how to do that.

It was a wonderful time to be at the BYU. I was very pleased. Of course, I spent most of my time down on the lower campus, because I was an art student at the academy, in the building they turned into a museum or library or something. That's where I spent most of my time, down on lower campus. I walked up and down the hill.

To go to the devotionals was wonderful. I loved the devotionals. I did not really participate much in the church, we went to the branch, but the branches were so big. We were just people that went to branches. I was a secretary in the branch. One of the secretaries, there were several secretaries. I did have that calling, and I was grateful for that. When we went to church on Sunday, it was just like going to a devotional on Tuesday. It was just big. I can't remember when they divided and made little branches. I don't remember, but it was just big and I did not feel a part of a branch, like the wards that we are in now. I don't know exactly how to explain it. After we got married, we were very much into the branch, of course, and it was different. But that was later on.

They needed to divide the branches, because you felt like a non-entity. It's absolutely necessary to have a smaller unit that you could get acquainted with each other. We have made so many changes. I just finished reading President Eyring's book and how BYU has developed, and it has been marvelous what they have done to the BYU and BYU Idaho. I am just so impressed. I just love the gospel with all my heart. I'm very grateful for the privilege of having gone to the BYU. I feel so privileged to be able to be born into my family. I'm just happy.

Mission in Germany

My husband and I, of course, speak German, because that was our language during the mission field, when we were young. And after our children were raised and gone, we decided to go on a mission. So we put in our papers and we went on a mission to Eastern Germany. In Eastern Germany, the wall had just been down for three years. So there were a lot of refugees that came over from Russia, well they were Russians that came over from Russia. They were refugees, and the Germans didn't want them, though they spoke German, they didn't want them. And so they were in nursing homes, old folks homes, and the missionaries at that time were asked to do a service project. The couples were not required to do service projects. But we decided that we wanted to do more than just the assignments that we had as missionaries. We were supposed to go, for the first three months, in Eastern Germany, and do reactivation. It was glorious to be able to go and find these different members that had been kind of left by the wayside because of the Cold War. It was very, very bad. There's a testimony to me that there is absolutely no progress without the spirit of the Lord. Absolutely no progress. The buildings were decrepit, they were falling down. I won't say more about that.

So we were transferred to go into a new branch and there were two places that we decided that we would do some service projects. One of them was a blind home, and we didn't do much service there other than to be entertained by these blind people. It was a joy. But in the old-folks home, they were able to tell the grief and the feelings that they had. The horrible things that happened to them.

There was one lady there, she was an atheist, and she asked us if we would like to join her choir. And you know what we would say. We said yes, and we joined her choir, but all it was was beer-drinking songs. So we decided that well, we would like to entertain you! So, I started leading her choir, and I started introducing hymns that they would know. As we started singing these hymns, she would look at her charges, her jaw would drop, her eyes would open up big, and she saw the emotions that these hymns were causing those people to bring up from the past. It was marvelous, really. My husband was playing the piano, and we were just singing hymns, and they joined with us. They loved singing their hymns. They were the Lutheran hymns, you know, and I chose the ones that they would really remember from

the past. We loved that lady that was in charge of them. She was a recreational lady in charge of these people. At first we sang Swiss yodels, because that was what we were used to, and I don't think they appreciated that. They didn't like the yodels. They said, "Can we do something else?" So that's when we went into the hymn singing.

At the very end, when she saw that we were going to leave to go home, she said, "Before you go, will you just do hymns this time?" We said yes, so we did some of the hymns, and then at the end, I said we're going to do two hymns that I don't think you'll know. One of them was "I Know that My Redeemer Lives," and the other was "How Great Thou Art." We started singing and it was more of a solo part at first, because I was the one that was singing. I said, "Now, if you want to join in, feel free to do so. If you feel comfortable singing." Honestly, they were not only singing, they were singing in parts. And I *know* the angels of heaven were singing with us. It was the most beautiful experience of my life, to hear those people raising their voices in song, singing praises to their redeemer. That was the most amazing experience of my life.

I love choir singing. It is truly a joy to me, to lead choirs and sing solos, but that was the epitome, I knew that the Lord was with us and was sustaining us in such a beautiful way. That lady that was in charge of her people, her mouth was open in awe. She just could not believe what she was seeing and hearing. That's my joy.

Testimony

We're so blessed. We are so blessed to be members of the Church of Jesus Christ. I am overwhelmed. There are not words to describe the feelings that are within my heart at this moment. I do know that Christ lives, and loves us, and leads us through His prophets today. There is no doubt. It is an amazing, amazing story to read how the Lord calls His servants and leads them along, and guides and directs His work upon the earth. It is an amazing situation.

My music, I've dedicated my singing, my voice, to Him. And my husband has accompanied me. We have had experiences of great joy. I remember one time when I was asked to lead a youth choir in singing for conference, and Elder Asay was the presiding general authority, and we sang these two numbers, and one of them was "I Heard Him Come." At the end of conference he says, "I have a favor to ask this wonderful choir: if they will please re-sing the song again." I think that was the biggest thrill we had. With my husband playing the organ and I was leading the singing, and those youth were just singing their hearts out as they sang "I Heard Him Come."

Well, I've got to say one more thing. President McKay was the one that gave me my diploma. He had been in our home, because my father was the president of our stake, and so he had stayed in our home, and I had sung for him in our home. I didn't think he would remember me. When I walked across the stage, he stopped me and asked me about my parents. I loved that man. Then in the mission he came over to make purchases for the temple, and we were there when they decided to build a temple in Switzerland. And in the mission home, I was able to sing for him again.

Those are my treasures, so treasure them, and treat them kindly, because they are so dear to me. They're sacred to me, so treat them that way, please.

I do love the Lord. The BYU has helped me tremendously, because I have learned. I have learned from the professors, I have learned from the Brethren, and I have gained a strong testimony of my Savior.